

Student Resource 1.1

Great Thinkers and Their Inventions "Vignettes"

Earmuffs: "Baby, Its Cold Outside" may have been the song running through 13-year-old Chester Greenwood's head one cold December day in 1873. To protect his ears while ice-skating, he found a piece of wire and, with his grandmother's help, padded the ends. In the beginning, his friends laughed at him. However, when they realized that he was able to stay outside skating long after they had gone inside freezing, they stopped laughing. Instead, they began to ask Chester to make ear covers for them, too. At age 17 Chester applied for a patent. For the next 60 years, Chester's factory made earmuffs, and earmuffs made Chester rich!

BAND-AID®: At the turn of the century, Mrs. Earl Dickson, an inexperienced cook, often burned and cut herself. Mr. Dickson, a Johnson and Johnson employee, got plenty of practice in hand bandaging! Out of concern for his wife's safety, he began to prepare bandages ahead of time so that his wife could apply them by herself. By combining a piece of surgical tape and a piece of gauze, he fashioned the first crude adhesive strip bandage!

LIFE-SAVERS® Candy: During the hot summer of 1913, Clarence Crane, a chocolate candy manufacturer, found himself facing a dilemma. When he tried to ship his chocolates to candy shops in other cities they melted into gooey blobs. To avoid dealing with the "mess," his customers were deferring their orders until cool weather. In order to retain his customers, Mr. Crane needed to find a substitute for the melted chocolates. He experimented with hard candy, which wouldn't melt during shipment. Using a machine designed for making medicine pills, Crane produced small, circular candies with a hole in the middle. The birth of LIFE SAVERS!

FRISBEE®: The term FRISBEE did not always refer to the familiar plastic disks we visualize flying through the air. Long ago (over 100 years ago), in Bridgeport, Connecticut, William Russell Frisbie owned the Frisbie Pie Company and delivered his pies locally. All of his pies were baked in the same type of 10" round tin with a raised edge, wide brim, six small holes in the bottom, and "Frisbie Pies" on the bottom. Playing catch with the tins soon became a popular local sport. However, the tins were slightly dangerous when a toss was missed. It became the Yale custom to yell "Frisbie" when throwing a pie tin. In the 1940s, when plastic emerged, the pie-tin game was recognized as a manufacturable and marketable product. (Note: FRISBEE® is a registered trademark of Wham-O Mfg. Co.)